



# **Singapore Area Coordinator (SAC) Welcome Aboard Booklet 2024**



# Congratulations on your orders to Singapore!

The Fleet and Family Support Office (FFSO) is happy to assist you with your relocation and transition needs. We are located in Building 7-4, Deck 2 and have many useful resources to help you settle in to your new home location.

Along with this booklet, your sponsor serves as an excellent resource and plays an important role in supplying timely information and answering your questions. If you have not heard from your sponsor please reach out to your command for an introduction and be sure to stay in contact with him/her throughout your transition.

Do you have children eligible for grades Kindergarten through 12th grade? Or questions on Child and Youth Programs (CYP) make sure check out the information on page 15 or email the School Liaison Officer at [SLO\\_Singapore@fe.navy.mil](mailto:SLO_Singapore@fe.navy.mil) for information on schools in Singapore and how to begin the process.

Bringing a pet to Singapore? Go to page 8 and be sure to start this complicated process early. Some breeds are not allowed in Singapore and others require a muzzle at all times when in public. You may want to consider hiring a professional pet re-locator to help you through the process.

Once you have you arrive make sure to sign up for the mandatory Area Orientation and Intercultural Awareness (AOB/ICR) class or email [SAC\\_FFSSO@fe.navy.mil](mailto:SAC_FFSSO@fe.navy.mil) for details on the first AOB/ICR available for you to attend.

I wish you the very best with your move and look forward to meeting you! Safe travels....

Sincerely,  
Lauren Panneck  
Singapore FFSSO Site Manager



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# Welcome to Singapore

**Despite its small land area a little over 700 square kilometers (about 3.5 times the size of the District of Columbia), Singapore is a modern, thriving city-state of 5.7 million people. Boasting one of the world's most advanced economies, efficient transportation networks and a tolerant mix of cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds, Singapore is often referred to as one of the most cosmopolitan locations in the world in which to live and work.**

## History and Culture

Although Singapore's history dates from the 11th century, the island was little known to the West until the 19th century, when in 1819, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles arrived as an agent of the British East India Company. In 1824, the British purchased Singapore Island from the Sultan of Johor and Temenggong, and within a few years Singapore was recognized as a major regional port. In 1867, Singapore was made a British Crown Colony, an arrangement that continued until 1946.

In the 20th century, the automobile industry's demand for rubber from Southeast Asia and the packaging industry's need for tin helped make Singapore one of the world's major ports. In 1921, the British constructed a naval base at Sembawang, which was soon supplemented by an air base. Days after the attack at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attacked Singapore, capturing the island in February 1942. It remained under their control until September 1945, when the British returned.

In 1946, Singapore became a separate British Crown Colony, and shortly after Singapore experienced a twelve-year "State of Emergency" when the Malayan Communist Party attempted to seize control of the peninsula. In 1959, Singapore became self-governing, and became an independent nation on August 9, 1965.

Today, Singapore is a diverse melting pot of cultures and religions. Singaporeans of Chinese ancestry make up the majority of the population (76%), with Malay (14%), Indian (8%) and British, other European and North Americans (2%) as minorities. Religious tolerance is stressed in Singapore, with Buddhism the predominant religion (42%), followed by significant Muslim (15%), Taoist (9%), non-denominational Christian (8%), Catholic (5%) and Hindu (4%) populations.

## Transportation

Singapore boasts one of the world's most efficient public transportation networks, comprised of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) train and bus network that laces through the island, and is incredibly easy to use. An abundance of inexpensive taxis are available as well.

## Politics

Singapore is a parliamentary republic with an elected president who serves as chief of state, and a prime minister heading the government. Following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or leader of the majority coalition is usually appointed prime minister by the president; deputy prime ministers are appointed by the president. The 84 members of Singapore's unicameral (single-house) parliament serve five-year terms; the president serves six-year terms.

## Climate

Situated one degree north of the Equator, Singapore enjoys a tropical climate. The lowest temperature ever recorded at Singapore was 66 degrees Fahrenheit. Year round, Singapore is hot, humid, and rainy. There are two distinct monsoon seasons - Northeastern monsoon (December to March) and Southwestern monsoon (June to September). Between monsoon seasons, afternoon and early evening thunderstorms are commonplace.

## Language

English is the official language of Singapore; all government and most private business is conducted in English. However, many Chinese, Bahasa and Tamil speakers have blended their native tongue with English, to create versions of "Singlish," which is often used in social settings and in the city's smaller shopping districts. In any event, communicating in English usually poses no problem in Singapore.

## Food in Singapore Culture

Eating is a favorite pastime in Singapore! Given its diverse cultural background, Singapore offers a wide variety of Asian, European and fusion restaurants to fit all budgets. "Hawker Stalls" are common at either the top floor or basement of most malls, and in open-air markets, where full meals can be had for as little as \$2 SGD. Alternately, some of Asia's finest dining can be found downtown. Sanitary standards in Singapore are world-class. Singapore's National Environment Agency conducts periodic inspections of all eateries, and grades (A, B or C) must be clearly posted by law.

## Economy

Singapore has a highly developed and successful free-market economy. It enjoys a remarkably open and corruption-free environment and stable prices. The economy depends heavily on exports, particularly in consumer electronics, information technology products, pharmaceuticals, and a growing service sector. In recent years, Singapore has attracted major investments in pharmaceuticals and medical technology production - and has established itself as Southeast Asia's financial and high-tech hub.

The currency unit is the Singapore dollar, with bills coming in denominations of \$2, 5, 10, 50 and 100. Though it fluctuates, the exchange rate typically ranges from \$1.2-1.4 SGD to \$1 USD.



## U.S. Military in Singapore

In 1990, the governments of Singapore and the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding, allowing the U.S. Navy to utilize certain Singapore Ministry of Defence facilities. Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (CLWP) moved to Singapore in July 1992, following the closure of the U.S. Navy base in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.

Through most of the '90s, the Navy maintained a presence of approximately 150 uniformed and civilian personnel in Singapore. The U.S. Air Force, which has a small number of personnel working from Paya Lebar Air Base, provided support services to U.S. military personnel and aircraft transiting through Singapore.

In 2007, Navy Region Singapore was officially established, and the Navy assumed all administrative and facility support functions from the Air Force, including housing, family support services, force protection, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, among others.

In 2018 Navy Region Singapore realigned under Command Navy Region Japan and became Singapore Area Coordinator (SAC). Today, the Singapore-based U.S. military community includes more than 1,200 active duty, civilian personnel and family members, distributed among 21 tenant commands.

### U.S. Navy sponsored commands:

- Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific /CTF-73
  - Designated Commanding Officer (DCO),
  - Senior Officer Present Afloat (SOPA)
- Military Sealift Command, Far East
- MSC FE Ship Support Unit Singapore
- Commander, Destroyer Squadron SEVEN
- Fleet Logistics Center Singapore
- Naval Criminal Investigative Service
- External Cooperation Office
- Naval Facilities Far East Singapore
- Naval Computer and Telecommunications Far East
- Navy Region Legal Support Office
- Navy Exchange

### Defense Agency, Joint and Service sponsored commands:

- Defense Contract Management Agency
- Defense Logistics Agency
- Special Operations Command Pacific
- Surface Deployment and Distribution Command
- Army Public Health Command
- 730 Air Mobility Squadron Detachment 2
- 497<sup>th</sup> Combat Training Squadron

### U.S. Embassy sponsored commands:

- U.S. Embassy Defense Attaché Office
- Naval Medical Research Center-Asia
- U.S. Coast Guard



# Preparing for Transfer

## **Overseas Screening**

Upon receiving orders, active duty members should immediately begin the process of overseas screening for you and your family at your current command. Your command's admin department will have details on the screening process, so contact them immediately. If you or your family needs to be enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) do so at your present command, as this is part of your overseas screening process.

## **Power of Attorney**

A power of attorney may be useful or necessary, especially if the service member will be absent from home for extended periods of time. A power of attorney may be tailored and limited to fit your particular needs, enabling the holder (usually a spouse or trusted friend) to act on behalf of the member. If you need a power of attorney before transferring, contact the nearest Legal Assistance Office.

## **Preparing Financially**

Relocating costs money, much of it up front. Though you will be reimbursed for many of these expenses, plan on spending between \$10,000-\$20,000 USD. Some anticipated costs may include:

- Traveling expenses such as meals, drinks, taxi fares, rental cars, hotels, etc.
- Pet quarantine expenses & veterinary fees.
- Expenses for dining out while waiting for temporary or permanent housing. Although you will be able to file for TLA/TQSA, you will need to pay up front for lodging until you are in permanent housing.
- Purchase a vehicle. Auto insurance (most companies require a year's premium up front, which can be up to \$1500 a year depending on policy).
- Deposits for telephone, cable and internet services
- Two to Three months rent (\$10,000-USD \$15,000 USD) advance rent as a security deposit if residing on the economy.

## **Post Office Box**

In Singapore, you'll receive your mail at a post office box at our military postal facility. With a copy of your orders, your sponsor can obtain a PO. box for you 90 days before your transfer. This is encouraged, as it allows you time to make change of address notifications for your bank, utility companies, investment managers, mail-order companies etc. before you leave. Additionally, if you exceed your baggage limits for your airline flight, you can mail ahead excess items to yourself. The command's official mailbox is only to be used for official mail and not for personal mail.

## **Preparing for the Flight**

Regardless of your carrier and routing, the flight to Singapore is long—possibly more than 24 hours if traveling from the East Coast! Making connections, clearing customs, tracking luggage—all become arduous when crunched into a couple of days, especially with the time zone changes. Get ready and rest up! Good preparation makes the trip easier. Ensure luggage has identification tags (but avoid using military rank). To avoid jetlag, drink lots of water during the flight and avoid alcohol. Bring a sweater and wear pants with socks and close-toed shoes, as the planes often get very cold during the long trip.

# Preparing for Transfer Continued

## Passports/Visas

Active duty personnel PCSing to Singapore are recommended to have an official passport in their possession, and are strongly encouraged to have a tourist passport as well. Family members and civilian personnel are required to have a “no-fee” passport upon arrival and are strongly encouraged to have a tourist passport. When you arrive at immigration at Singapore’s Changi Airport, present one of your passports to the agent, and they’ll stamp it with a visitor’s permit valid for 90 days. When you check in to your command, all passports for you and your family will be collected; your admin representative will take them to the Immigration and Checkpoint Authority, where each is given a special Foreign Identification Number stamp (FIN). The FIN serves as proof that you’re legally in Singapore, and is valid through your projected rotation date (PRD) as stipulated on your orders. Presenting your passport with FIN stamp is mandatory to start many services in Singapore, such as cable/internet service, getting a library card, or opening a bank account. Visas are not required for U.S. citizens to enter Singapore, but they are required to visit nearby countries (Indonesia and the Vietnam, for example). Before visiting any country, always check that country’s embassy Web site for any visa requirements.

## Medical Requirements

As noted earlier, active duty military and family members are required to undergo overseas medical and dental screenings immediately upon receipt of orders to an overseas location. The Overseas screening (OSS) must be completed in 30 days for SM and 60 days for family, best to do at the same time. Singapore’s military community has a limited medical staff. There is no military hospital, but the Medical Aid Station care team is comprised of a contract physician assisted by an independent duty corpsman. The Medical Aid Station is only available for active duty members. A Navy dentist is also on staff. Cases that cannot be handled by the medical team are sent to physicians or hospitals in the civilian community, where the standard of care meets or exceeds that available in the U.S. under the military TRICARE system. For family members with chronic health problems or who require long-term or specialized treatment, please ensure these are addressed during your overseas screening and enrollment in EFMP. If the physician completing your screening has any questions, please have them contact the Sembawang Medical Aid Station staff at (+65) 9672-2643 regarding the availability of certain treatments. Failure to divulge this information could adversely impact your health and the well-being of your family members. Additionally, such failure may result in the early return of your family members at your expense, and may subject you to charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

## Household Goods Shipments

Contact your detaching command’s Defense Personal Property office (DPO) early for a full explanation of your entitlements, and to make appointments for household goods pickup (see more on this topic under Personal Property). <https://dps.move.mil/cust/standard/user/home.xhtml>

## Temporary Lodging

Singapore’s Temporary Lodging Facility (TLF) is the Navy Gateway Inn & Suites (also known as the Sling Inn), is located within the Sembawang housing area. These units are 2 and 3 bedroom, fully-furnished, apartment-style flats. Each flat has a multisystem television, full or partial kitchen facility, including microwaves, pots, pans, and table settings for six. Irons (220 volts) and ironing boards are available in each apartment, as are washers and dryers. If you have children, it is recommended that you mail or MPS a package with favorite toys, games, etc. before departing for Singapore.

Pets are allowed in temporary living quarters. You can make temporary lodging reservations at the Navy Gateway Inn & Suites by calling 1-877-628-9233, commercial (+65) 6752-8245, DSN (315) 421-2299, or online at <https://ngis.dodlodging.net/>





# Personal Property

**Generally, people transferring to Singapore are eligible for three personal property shipments: an express shipment of non-furniture items (may include clothing, bicycles and small appliances); a main household goods shipment; and a shipment of bulky items to go to non-temporary storage in the U.S. (washers, dryers, excess furniture, etc.).**

**Household goods shipments typically take 75-90 days to arrive from CONUS; shipments from Europe can take up to a month longer. Again, it's imperative visit the Defense Personal Property System (DPS) web site to schedule your move track your shipment or file a claim as early in the PCS process as possible. <https://dps.move.mil/cust/standard/user/home.xhtml>**

## **Express Shipment**

You are entitled to one express shipment (sometimes called unaccompanied baggage). This shipment travels by air freight and typically takes 30-45 days to arrive in Singapore, depending on the point of origin. This shipment is limited to 1,000 pounds, excluding professional material, and may not include furniture. Current Navy Region Center Singapore policy requires that all uniformed personnel reside in government-leased housing until housing reaches 95% occupancy. When housing is at 95% occupancy you may request to live on the economy through the housing office. Assignment to your permanent, government- leased quarters typically takes less than one month. If assigned to government quarters before your household goods arrive, loaner furniture and hospitality kits, containing dishes, cookware and utensils, are available for you to use for up to 90 days while awaiting your household goods. With this in mind, items you may want to include in your express shipment are: bed linens, towels, a small TV (220V or multi- voltage recommended), a 60-90 day supply of prescription medications, an extra pair of glasses/contacts, professional books, uniforms and equipment needed in the performance of official duties, a computer, alarm clocks, bicycles, toys, swimwear and pool toys, video games and board games, sidewalk chalk for younger kids, comfortable walking shoes, hand tools, an iron and ironing board, clothes hangers and any additional items that will make your family comfortable during the transition.

## **Vehicle Shipments Not Authorized**

You will NOT be entitled to ship a privately owned vehicle (POV), motorcycle or moped to Singapore, due to the country's strict customs laws and restrictions on vehicle imports. This import restriction applies regardless of where your vehicle was purchased.

You may be entitled to have your vehicle stored at government expense (in a government-contracted storage facility, or at a facility of your choice/location) for the duration of your tour here. If overseas, your installation Personal Property Office (PPO) can arrange to ship your vehicle to CONUS at government expense, where it can then be stored. Contact your PPO or visit the DPO web site for more details.

# Personal Property Continued

## What Should I Bring to Singapore?

Most electrical outlets in Singapore homes are 220-230 volt, 50 cycle, with three-prong outlets. If your appliances, TV, computer and other items aren't dual-voltage, they must be plugged into a transformer, which the housing office will provide. To determine if your item is dual-voltage, check the cord: it will usually indicate if the item is 110V only, or if it can safely operate within a voltage range, usually 110-240V. The Sembawang housing units have been retrofitted with 110V, American outlets.

Your U.S. television will work with the free cable TV system in the Sembawang housing area or with the StarHub cable TV box.

## Particular Items to Bring

You can find most any grocery, home and clothing items you need in Singapore. You might want to consider bringing certain consumable items with you if you're unsure of their availability here. Check with moving representative, though, to inquire regarding importing of food.

Other items you might want to consider bringing include: vitamins, personal hygiene products, baby food and baby products, spices, particular ethnic products, an oven thermometer, uniforms (the NEX only stocks a few uniform items), limited winter clothing for traveling, clothing for large individuals as most local clothing comes in smaller sizes to include shoes, storage units, tools, a gas grill (grills are expensive here); gas tanks are easy to get, and adaptors to match your U.S. grill are available, outdoor furniture, area rugs, a holiday tree and decorations including lights, pet medications, children's games and toys, lawn and garden tools, extra children's clothes, hair products, sewing and crafts supplies. If in doubt of a product's availability in Singapore, ask your sponsor.

## What Should I NOT Bring to Singapore?

Because of storage limitations, you're strongly discouraged from shipping major appliances (washers, dryers, chest freezers, dishwashers, refrigerators and stoves) to Singapore. The housing office will provide these items. If authorized to live off base, homes have appliances included as part of the lease.

Several items are prohibited from importation into Singapore, and should not be included in your household goods. If discovered, you could face stiff fines, or even jail time. These include:

- Alcoholic beverages. Though alcohol is legal in Singapore, it must be purchased in-country from authorized retailers (the Navy Exchange at Sembawang carries a wide selection of beer, wine and spirits).
- Controlled drugs and psychotropics (LSD, heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, mescaline, marijuana, etc). The penalty for importation is death.
- Pornography. Singapore has strict censorship laws regarding pornography in video, print and software formats. Many movies that merit an R or NC-17 rating due to sexual content might be considered obscene under Singapore law, so if in doubt, leave them behind.
- Tobacco products. These are legal, but must be bought here.
- Electronic cigarettes. These are illegal in Singapore.
- Plants, their seeds, or soil (to include bagged potting soil).
- Products made from endangered species.
- Fireworks, explosives, and ammunition.
- Firearms, bows-and-arrows, BB guns and paintball guns (basically, anything that fires a projectile - excluding Nerf-style toys - could fit this category. If in doubt, ask your sponsor).
- "Pirated" DVDs, CDs, and copyrighted items.
- Cigarette lighters in the shape of revolvers or handguns.
- Radio equipment, such as HAM radios, CBs or walkie-talkies (special permits are required)



# Pets

## Types of Pets Allowed

While you may bring pets to Singapore, there are several things to consider regarding types and sizes of pets. According to Singapore law, only dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, mice, chinchillas, red-eared sliders (a type of terrapin), and many types of ornamental birds and fish may be kept as pets. It's illegal to keep reptiles such as snakes and lizards, exotic animals (tigers, lynx), monkeys, spiders, insects or any endangered species as pets.

Additionally, certain breeds of dogs are considered dangerous, and their import into Singapore is prohibited. These breeds, called "Category A" dogs, include:

Pit Bull Terriers (including the American Pit Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, American Bulldog and Staffordshire Bull Terrier)

Akita

Tosa (also called Tosa Inu)

Neapolitan Mastiff

Any cross of any Pit Bull, Akita, Neapolitan Mastiff or Tosa

Certain other breeds are known as "Category B" dogs. These animals can be imported into Singapore, but must be leashed and muzzled at all times when in public. These breeds include:

Bull Mastiff

Bull Terrier

Doberman Pinscher

German Shepherd or related breeds

Rottweiler

Perro de Prensa Canario

In Sembawang's government-leased housing, pets are limited to dogs, cats, rodents, caged birds and fish. Animals kept in housing must be registered; simply complete a form in the housing office before bringing your animal home. For those residing on the economy, many landlords will impose similar limits on pets.

Singapore requires you to coordinate shipment to a booked quarantine space for your pet(s). Bringing pets into Singapore is expensive (often \$1,000 USD or more) and time-consuming, but it can be done. You can either do the work yourself, or hire a pet agent to complete the import arrangements (for a fee, of course). Check with the agent to make sure the services he/she offers match your needs. If you use such a service, usually you will need a pet agent from your country of origin, plus another pet agent from Singapore. If you hire a pet agent from Singapore, they can act as a liaison between you and the Quarantine Station (again, for a fee) and the AVA (Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore). They can assist with processing necessary forms, scheduling fee payments, booking a quarantine space, arranging for additional transportation, and delivery of your pet upon completion of a 30-day quarantine period.

Shop around online for pet agency services. No private pet agents are endorsed by the U.S. government.

If you're contemplating bringing a pet visit the AVA Web site at <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/avs> for the latest requirements, fees, and required forms.



# Driving in Singapore

**Traffic in Singapore moves on the left side of the road, as it does in England and Japan; steering wheels are on the right hand side of the car. Traffic signs are similar to those found in Europe or Japan. You must attend SAC Area Orientation Intercultural Relation Class (AOB/ICR) before attending the SAC Driver's Safety class and receiving your drivers license for Singapore. More information will be provided during AOB/ICR Class**

## **Driver's Licenses**

By agreement with the Singapore government, U.S. military personnel, family members and civilians can drive vehicles in Singapore with a valid U.S. driver's license (check your expiration date prior to travel so it does not expire while here?) upon completing a one-day driver's orientation course (free, conducted by SAC). Graduates receive a driver's card that expires concurrently with their stateside license; drivers must keep this in their possession at all times. AOB/ICR class attendance is a prerequisite to obtaining a drivers license in Singapore.

Those who desire to ride a motorcycle in Singapore must have completed a Navy-approved motorcycle safety course, have a valid stateside motorcycle license, and apply for a Singaporean Motorcycle License. A driver's card does not permit a person to operate a motorcycle legally in Singapore. Navy-approved motorcycle safety courses are not offered in Singapore; this requirement would need to be satisfied before leaving your current location and updated as required at your own expense.

## **Auto Insurance**

You must obtain liability insurance to operate a vehicle in Singapore. Most stateside carriers (including USAA) do not write auto policies for Singapore, so you must obtain insurance from a local carrier. Your sponsor can help you with this. Most insurance companies in Singapore require a year's premium up front, which can be \$600-1,500 SGD depending on policy particulars.

Many U.S. insurance carriers (including USAA) will keep your stateside policy in force upon request. This covers you when you drive in the States on leave or TAD, and maintains policy continuity for future discounts when you return to the States. Contact your insurance carrier to see if this service is offered.

## **Finding a Vehicle**

As discussed in the Personal Property section, customs regulations prohibit the importation of privately owned, left-hand-drive vehicles into Singapore.

Normally, purchasing a vehicle in Singapore is very costly due to the Certificate of Entitlement (COE) program. This plan, implemented by the government to reduce the number of cars on Singapore's roads, requires one to obtain a COE before purchasing a vehicle. Costs of COEs vary, from a few thousand SGD, to more than \$80,000 SGD. And that's just to get permission to buy a car!

Fortunately, U.S. military personnel and civilians are allowed to own one COE-exempt vehicle in Singapore. You can purchase a used vehicle from a departing service member or U.S. Embassy employee, or you can purchase one new vehicle. Purchase costs vary based on vehicle condition/age/type, ranging from \$2,000 USD for a decade-old sedan to \$40,000 USD and up for a newer vehicle. Your sponsor can provide more information on vehicle options.

## **Auto Registration and Taxes**

Registering a vehicle in Singapore can be a time-consuming and complex affair requiring multiple trips to different government agencies. Many people find it convenient to hire a local vendor to do this for them. Should you choose to do it yourself, N0CR representative in Bldg. 7-4 will provide you with step-by-step detailed instructions.

Vehicles in Singapore are required to undergo an annual inspection and road taxes are due every six months (approx. \$800-1,200 SGD depending on vehicle size/age). Again, you can do this yourself, or use a local vendor. Talk with your sponsor for details.



# Housing

## **Housing**

Singapore Area Coordinator currently has a mandatory government assignment housing policy for all uniformed personnel until housing reaches 95% occupancy. Upon arrival in Singapore, all personnel (officer and enlisted) will be assigned to government leased housing, based on rank, family size and availability. Eligibility for housing does not ensure availability or assignment of housing.

Should adequate government leased housing not be available, you will be authorized to find a place on the local community and collect OHA. The housing office provides those authorized to reside on the local community (off base) to register for an off base housing brief. For more information, contact housing at DSN 315 421 2800 or email [Singapore\\_Housing@navy.mil](mailto:Singapore_Housing@navy.mil).

## **Family and Unaccompanied Housing**

The housing office manages 1 General & Flag Officer Quarter (GFOQ), 70 family housing (FH) units and 6 unaccompanied housing (UH) units with 12 beds within the Sembawang housing area. All housing is leased from the Singapore Ministry of Defence. These British Colonial style residences are built between 1920 and 1950.

Family housing units consist of three (3) varieties: 2-bedroom duplex, 3-bedroom bungalow and 4-bedroom flats (apartment style). All family housing units are equipped with washer, dryer, fenced yard, refrigerator, microwave, gas stove with electric oven, air conditioners, in-ceiling lighting, ceiling fans and fiber optic terminal point for internet connection. The electrical system in Singapore is 220 volts/ 50 hertz cycle; but there are 110 volts/ 50 hertz cycle outlets in family housing unit. Hence electronic items purchased in the States are able to plug directly into the wall outlets.

Unaccompanied housing units are 2-bedroom apartment. A maximum of 2 sailors, E-4 and below or E-4 <4, can be assigned to each apartment. All UH units are equipped with washer, dryer, microwave, gas stove with electric oven, air conditioners, in-ceiling lighting, ceiling fans and fiber optic terminal point for internet connection. As UH units do not have 110 volt outlets in the apartment, step down transformers are provided in each apartment.

All FH & UH housing units have cable TV boxes carrying six Armed Forces Network (AFN) channels free of charge. Telephone and internet service, as well as commercial cable TV, are available through commercial providers, StarHub, SingTel among others.

Most housing types do not have built-in closets (using wardrobes instead), and storage space can be quite limited in some of these houses. There are no government facilities in Sembawang for storing excess furnishings, and the facilities on the economy can be expensive. It's best to leave bulky or rarely used items in the States, in a long term storage facility as arranged by your current personal property office.

## **Housing Eligibility**

Once you have orders to Singapore, ask your sponsor to provide the housing office with a copy of your orders, estimated arrival date, family composition and contact e-mail.

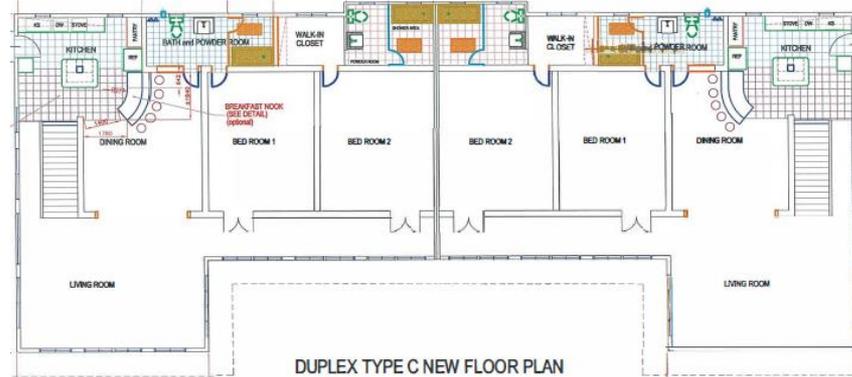
The housing office will send you a welcome e mail and the housing application package. Housing assignments are made according to eligibility, family size and availability. The detach date is the control date for the wait list for government leased housing. You need to physically check in with housing office within 72 hours of your arrival to determine your wait list position.

Availability, family size and family configuration are primary considerations regarding whether a two, three or four bedroom unit will be assigned.

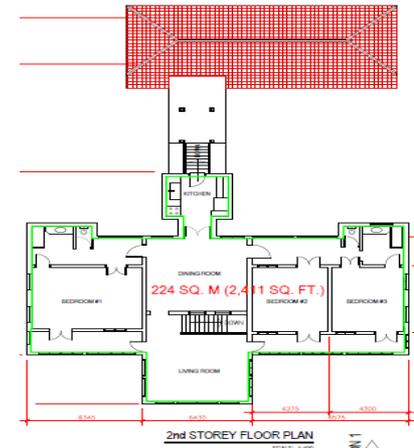
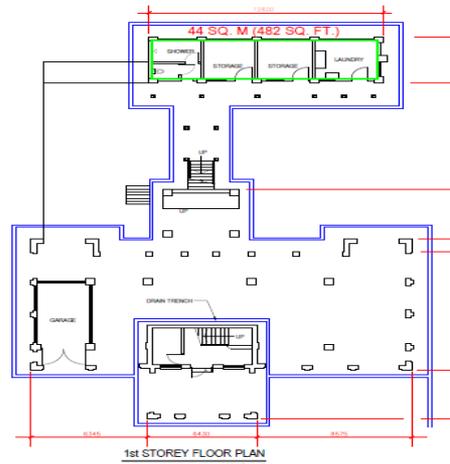
You may also refer to this website for up to date housing information –

<https://ffr.cnic.navy.mil/Navy-Housing/Housing-By-Region/Japan/Singapore-Area-Coordinator/>

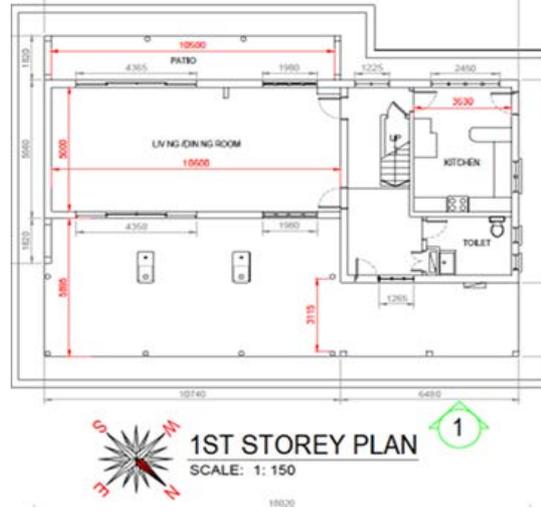
# 2-BR B&W Duplex



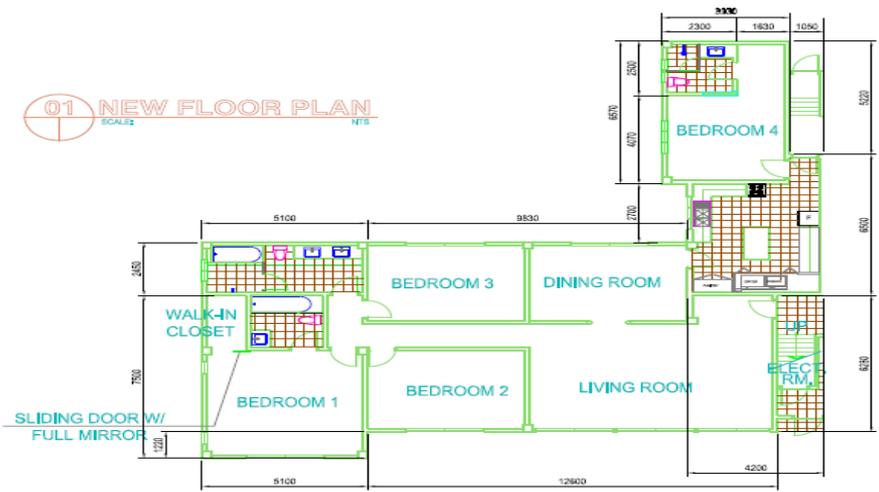
# 3-BR B&W Bungalow



# 3-BR Brick Bungalow



# 4-BR Apartments/Flats







# Getting Settled in Singapore

**When you arrive in Singapore, your sponsor will meet you and your family at Changi Airport and bring you to the temporary lodging facility, the Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS). In the event something should occur and your sponsor cannot meet you, go to the taxi line (or queue) and tell the taxi driver to take you to 295B Durban Rd (Postal Code 759638). The taxi fare from the airport to Sembawang is approximately \$45SGD (about \$35 USD). You may want to get Singapore Dollars from a money changer or ATM before leaving the airport. There is no ATM near the lodging facility.**

**The phone number to NGIS is (+65) 6752-8245.**

**You may be jet-lagged for a few days, but some find the best way to acclimate is to jump in and begin exploring their new neighborhood. Here are a few things you'll want to know during your first days here.**

## **Sembawang Community Shuttle**

Singapore Area Coordinator operates a shuttle service which runs every 30 minutes from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday-Friday through the housing area. The shuttle begins and ends each run at Bldg. 7-4 (the central command building) in the Sembawang Port area, making it convenient for those carrying groceries or packages. Look for the van with a "Community Shuttle" placard on the dash, and be prepared to show your ID card on demand.

## **Trains & Taxis**

If you need a taxi, you can request doorstep service by downloading a taxi or Grab app. From the airport just follow the signs to the taxi queue. When hailing a cab from the street, if there is a red sign ("on-call" or a neighborhood indicating where he lives) in the window, the taxi driver can refuse to take you to your destination. Without this sign, he is obligated to take you, and if he refuses, verbally note his taxi number. Taxi companies are happy to take reports of unhelpful cabbies. All taxis in Singapore are metered, and most cabs can accept credit cards. Though rare, if a cab driver tries to take you without using the meter, insist that it be used or you'll report the incident, or take another cab.

## **Credit Cards**

Credit cards are widely accepted in Singapore, but some grocery stores and smaller shops will only accept cards issued by local banks, if at all. It's a good idea when going out that you carry an ATM card or cash for any purchases that cannot be made with a credit card. ATMs are plentiful in Singapore, and most all are members of the Plus, Cirrus, or other global networks. ATM fees can be steep, up to \$5 SGD per withdrawal, so consider using them sparingly. ATM dispensing Singapore currency is available at the NRCS complex.

## **Civilian Clothing and Uniforms**

Americans are advised to wear off-base attire that blends with local society. Though many Singaporeans do dress in shorts and flip-flops, long pants and buttoned shirts are common. Dress, in general, is a bit more formal than in the States.

Military personnel may wear uniforms off base when transiting to/from home and work, getting fuel, or when visiting other locations on official business (Changi Naval Base, for example). Uniforms are not considered appropriate liberty attire in Singapore. Due to the tropical climate, summer uniforms are prescribed year round. However, many locations in theater, such as Japan and Korea, do switch to winter uniforms.



# Force Protection and Crime

Living and working overseas carries its own force protection considerations beyond those in the States. You should always be mindful of the potential for terrorist attacks, and military members must always remain particularly vigilant.

Singapore is quite peaceful given its population density. Violent crime is very rare --Singapore reported just six murders in all of 2022 (Los Angeles, with a smaller population of 3.8 million, reported 380). Violent crimes such as assault, rape and robbery are equally rare. Petty theft incidents (pickpocketing, purse snatching) are also rare, though it is still advised to exercise caution. Remember: low crime does not mean no crime. As anywhere, always be alert to your surroundings and trust your instincts.

Importing or merely possessing illegal drugs is punishable by death in Singapore and many other Southeast Asian countries. "Cheating," which includes shortchanging or borrowing without returning, is illegal and vigorously prosecuted. Unwanted touching of a woman can result in charges of "outraging the modesty of a female." Jaywalking, littering and minor traffic offenses all carry stiff fines, and vandalism of property can result in jail time or caning. Before visiting other Southeast Asian countries, you will need a country-specific force protection brief. Travel to certain countries can be restricted periodically due to heightened threat conditions. The force protection office can help you with these areas.

Newly arriving personnel also receive additional information about Singapore's laws during their newcomers' brief.

As part of your overseas screening, you and your adult family members must complete a level one force protection brief.

Before visiting other countries in the region, travelers are required by U.S. Pacific Command to receive a country-specific force protection brief and as necessary, submit appropriate IATP (Individual Anti-Terrorism Plan) and APACS (Aircraft and Personnel Automated Clearance System) documentation. This paperwork ensures members are accounted for in the event of an incident and to inform them if travel to countries is restricted due to heightened threat conditions. The force protection office can help you with this process.

## You and the Law

All U.S. military personnel, civilians and their family members are subject to Singaporean law and generally come under Singaporean jurisdiction for most criminal offenses. There is no immunity from prosecution granted under the Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. and Singapore. As guests, we are obliged to comply with and refrain from activities inconsistent with Singaporean law. Further, we must refrain from involvement in Singaporean politics or internal matters.

Singapore has very stiff penalties for offenses considered minor in the States. Jaywalkers can receive on-the-spot fines of up to \$500 SGD; littering or spitting chewing gum on the ground can incur a fine of \$1,000 SGD. Vandalism of property can earn a fine of \$5,000 SGD, caning, jail time, or a combination of the three. If charged with 'Outraging the modesty of a female' it is a mandatory arrest. Trafficking or selling drugs carries a mandatory penalty of death.

Officials of both governments cooperate in investigating and prosecuting criminal offenses. Singaporean police have the power to arrest you. If you are apprehended by local law enforcement, follow this guidance:

- Comply with police orders; do not resist arrest.
- Go willingly with Singaporean police authorities.
- Politely request the presence of a U.S. Embassy or command representative and/or a U.S. government-provided attorney prior to making any statements.

Should you find yourself in any kind of involvement with law enforcement (even tickets), notify your chain of command immediately.

# Domestic Workers



Many families in Singapore retain the services of a domestic helper, finding the convenience of full-time help well worth the cost. Though individual contracts vary, helpers often handle a variety of household duties including all cleaning, cooking, child care and light yard work such as raking. Some helpers do additional duties, such as grocery shopping, pet walking and cleaning the family car. Families living in government housing must have at least one child under the age of 18 or an infirmed adult dependent to be able to hire a domestic helper. Some family housing in Sembawang has helper's quarters in a detached building behind the home, complete with full bath, which makes the arrangement convenient.

Helpers can be found one of three ways: you can retain a helper from a family that is departing; you can work through a local agency to find a helper already in Singapore; or you can use an agency to bring a helper to Singapore from another country.

In any case, there are certain expenses you will incur, based on your helper's experience level, duties or source:

- Helper's salary. These typically range from \$600-1,000 SGD per month, depending on the helper's scope of duties and experience level.
- Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) Levy. This monthly levy of \$300 SGD is payable to the Singapore government, and is required to legally employ a foreign employee. This payment is deducted monthly from your local Singaporean bank account, a must if you wish to employ a helper.
- Insurance. Employers must maintain \$40,000 SGD personal accident insurance, a \$5,000 SGD security guarantee bond, and \$5,000 SGD medical insurance coverage per employee. Any local insurance agency can provide these and costs typically run between \$150-250 SGD per year. Helpers from certain countries (the Philippines, for example) are also required to post a bond with their native government, which the employer is expected to pay.
- There are additional costs to consider. Employers typically provide the helper's meals, which can certainly impact your monthly budget. Some agencies may pass along fees such as commissions/travel expenses, and passport processing costs.

If you are considering a helper, it is best to talk to a family that currently employs one. In addition, Singapore's Ministry of Manpower requires first-time FDW employers to attend a three-hour workshop to familiarize themselves with all the responsibilities and costs. For more information on helpers, visit the Ministry's website at [www.mom.gov.sg](http://www.mom.gov.sg).



# Educational Opportunities & Schools

## Elementary and High Schools

School Liaison Officers are employed to help navigate academic pressures on military children and their families as they move around the world and transfer between school systems. SAC SLO is here to assist you with just about any school-related question. [SLO\\_Singapore@fe.navy.mil](mailto:SLO_Singapore@fe.navy.mil)

As we do not have a DODEA school in Singapore, families eligible for the Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) have the opportunity to choose a school option (for students in grades K through 12), including private schools and home school programs, that best meets the needs of their children and family. NDSP provides support and funding for the education of authorized command-sponsored dependents of military members and DoD civilian employees assigned to overseas areas where no DODEA school is available within the commuting area.

To enroll in NDSP:

1. Gather information about the educational options available and decide which option is best for the family. The SLO has several resources available to assist families with this process. A telephone call with the SLO is highly recommended as your first step in the schools process.
2. To enroll in NDSP, visit the NDSP website and complete the online registration process - <https://registration.dodea.edu/NDSP/privacy-act.cfm>. PCS orders are needed to complete the NDSP online registration process. If full names of dependents are not listed on the orders Dependent Entry Approval is also required. NDSP will process the enrollment and send an email notification to the sponsor and SLO finalizing enrollment in NDSP.
3. Upon receipt of the email notification of approval from NDSP, the sponsor may proceed with completing the application to the school identified in the NDSP enrollment.

Note: The <https://www.dodea.edu/non-dod-schools/newcomer/initial-registration> outlines the NDSP registration process.

Please note, NDSP policy indicates:

- Approval for the enrolment of an eligible minor dependent of DoD sponsor must be obtained prior to enrolling a child in a non-DoD school.
- Sponsor MUST obtain approval for tuition and other expenses from DODEA HQ NDSP office prior to incurring any expense.

# Child & Youth Programs

## Birth to 5

Singapore Child and Youth Programs (CYP) does not offer full-time care for children ages, birth to five years old. Please contact CYP at for more information. Additional childcare options are available on the local economy. [cyp.singapore@cnriffr.org](mailto:cyp.singapore@cnriffr.org)

## Recreational School Age Program (Grades K-5)

SAC CYP offers a fun, vibrant Recreational School-Age Program (RSAP) for eligible youth enrolled in kindergarten through grade 5. Singapore's RSAP program offers special events, Youth Sports and Fitness activities, extended hours for school-out days. The RSAP program offers facility-based core programming in six core areas: the arts; character and leadership development; education and career; health and life skills; sports, fitness and recreation; and technology. In partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and the 4-H Youth Development Organization, youth can get involved in numerous clubs and events, including: BGCA Fine Arts, BGCA Image Makers, 4-H Community Club, BGCA Triple Play and many more options throughout the year.



## Summer Day Camp (Completed grades K-6)

SAC CYP offers a Summer Day Camp program for eligible youth who have completed Kindergarten through grade 6. Summer Day Camp is offered in weekly sessions and includes opportunities for fun and adventure including field trips and facility-based core programming in six core areas: the arts; character and leadership development; education and career; health and life skills; sports, fitness and recreation; and technology. In partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and the 4-H Youth Development Organization, youth can get involved in numerous clubs and events, including: BGCA Fine Arts, BGCA Image Makers, 4-H Community Club, BGCA Triple Play. To submit a request for care in the Summer Day Camp program, visit [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com).

## Teen Center (Grades 6-12)

SAC Teen Center provides eligible youth, in grades six through twelve, a chill place to hang out with friends. Singapore's Teen Center offers teen trips, late night fun and adventures, Youth Sports and Fitness activities, extended hours for school-out days, and a Teen Employment Program. The Teen Center offers facility-based core programming programs in six core areas: the arts; character and leadership development; education and career; health and life skills; sports, fitness and recreation; and technology. In partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and the 4-H Youth Development Organization, teens can also get involved in numerous clubs and events, including: BGCA Youth of the Year, 4-H STEAM Camps, BGCA Keystone Club, 4-H Community Club, BGCA Smart Girls and many more options throughout the year.

# Services and Quality of Life Programs

## Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)

Singapore's MWR programs and facilities are among the finest in the Navy. MWR offers a myriad of programs for the whole family. MWR facilities include:

- **Fitness Center:** The Fitness Center is an easily accessible and massive ship repair facility that was converted to an indoor fitness center and recently upgraded in several areas to better support the needs of the community. The facility offers top of the line strength and cardio training areas including three free-weight areas, a power lifting area with platform, two cardio areas packed with treadmills, bikes, ellipticals, rowers, steppers, vertical climbers, and a Jacob's Ladder and App Audio with the TVs. In addition to all these multiple strength and cardio options, there is also an indoor Group Exercise Room/NOFFs Zone, Tennis Court, Basketball Court, Racquetball Court, and a FUN, colorful Family Fitness Zone, where the parent or guardian can exercise as youth 9 and under play in an easily supervised soft play area. Small equipment is stationed throughout the Fleet Fitness Center including tires, sledgehammers, battle ropes, punching bags, TRX sets, jump ropes, bands, stability balls, medicine balls, mats, and more. Bicycles and other equipment (coolers, tables, sports equipment, etc.) may also be checked out for up to two weeks at a time from the FFC first for Active Duty Military and those PCS-ing in/ out of Singapore and second for all others attached to the Installation based on availability. Finally, a laundromat, free Wi-Fi, and locker rooms with showers are also available for all authorized users. <https://www.navymwrsingapore.com/>
- **Terror Club:** The Terror Club (named after the British Royal Navy discovery vessel HMS Terror) is Singapore's all-hands club, open to U.S., British, Australian and New Zealand Sailors, government civilian employees and their families. Situated around a 30-meter pool, the Terror Club offers a full-service restaurant and bar, along with games and wi-fi internet, with menu prices far below what you would pay in town. Open Mon-Fri with varying hours. The Terror Club can be reached at (+65) 6759-3694.



- **Sports Complex:** Adjacent to the Terror Club is the Outdoor Terror Club Sports Complex which includes a newly remodeled and very inviting 330-meter pool / children's wading pool, a multipurpose turf field for softball, football, soccer, and track & field events and a newly upgraded sand volleyball court. In addition to these recently renovated outdoor sports areas, there is also a basketball court and two tennis courts for all to enjoy. Sports equipment for these sports may be checked out at the Terror Club ID Checker Guard House. This Sports Complex is also easily accessible by the community and visiting ships docked in Sembawang or for those visiting by bus during port visits. By request, all these sports areas can be reserved for sports or command events. The Sports Complex hours of operation follow the Terror Club's hours of operation; however, the pools are open from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday to Sunday. For more information, or to reserve the fields, courts or pool, please contact the Fleet Fitness Center at (+65) 6750-2482.
- **Veterinary Services:** There are no government vet services available for pets in Singapore. Commercial vets are used for all treatments.
- **Hair & Nail Care, Dry Cleaning:** unisex family salon run by two sisters, Kim and Shirley, provides hair care at reasonable prices (a military haircut runs \$15 SGD), comparable to economical shops in the states. Additional hair care facilities can be found in Sembawang Shopping Center, Northpoint Shopping Center, Holland Village and in most other shopping districts. Kim and Shirley also run a dry cleaning operation, offering competitive prices. Their shop is located in Bldg. 7-4.

# Services and Quality of Life Programs Continued

## Medical Aid Station

The Sembawang Medical Aid Station (MAS) consists of a Navy dentist and independent duty corpsmen provide dental care to active-duty members. For patients with requirements beyond what the MAS can provide, referrals will be made to an appropriate clinic in town or one of the provider hospitals. The standards of medical care in Singapore are among the best in the world, and you should feel comfortable using facilities if you are given a referral. Singapore is a TRICARE Remote Overseas (TRO) location, and referral and billing services are provided by International SOS, a third party contractor.

The MAS is open 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m., Mon-Fri, with same-day appointments often possible. Contact them at commercial (+65) 6257-4233.

## Navy Federal Credit Union

Navy Federal Credit Union maintains a Singapore branch, located on the first floor of Bldg. 7-4. Services include check cashing (U.S. currency only), withdrawals, deposits, Western Union transfers (both domestic & international), Bank Wire transfers (both domestic & international), IRAs, CDs, loans, member-to-member/external account transfers, and instant Visa check card issuance. Additionally, NFCU maintains an ATM at the Terror Club that disburses U.S. currency. Membership is open to military, DoD and contractor personnel stationed in Singapore. Hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mon-Fri, excluding U.S. holidays. Contact NFCU at 1-888-842-6328.

## Singapore Banking Facilities

If you employ a helper or use the tax-free gas program, you will need to open an account at a local banking institution in Singapore. Check out the institutions for their specific services. There is a minimum balance required to keep an account open, and minimums vary from bank to bank. When opening a local account, you will likely need at least \$500 SGD and your passport with its FIN number. Most banking institutions will accept a U.S. check, but it will take 3-6 weeks to clear and there will be a fee for this service. ATMs are available all over the island. The service charges vary by bank, and balances are listed in Singapore dollars, not U.S. dollars.

## Cash Cage

The Navy operates a cash cage on the first floor of Bldg. 7-4, where you can cash Navy Federal drafts and checks from U.S. banks (\$2,000 daily limit), and exchange U.S. dollars for Singapore dollars. The cash cage is open from 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Mon-Fri.

## Post Office

The Fleet Industrial Support Center runs a military post office adjacent to Bldg. 7-4. Staffed by Navy Logistics Specialists, the post office offers all services found at stateside post offices, from Postal Money Orders to buying stamps and mailing packages.

First class letters to/from CONUS typically take 6-8 days; packages can take a bit longer as they must clear a customs gateway. The post office accepts packages bound for offices/ bases via the Military Postal System (MPS) free of charge as long as guidelines are followed; check with the post office for details.

## Navy Exchange

The Navy Exchange (NEX) system operates a small 7,000 square-foot store located in Bldg. 7-4. The store carries a wide range of line items, including dry, canned and frozen foods, milk/dairy products, household cleaning supplies, toiletries, household items (towels, brooms, etc.), and a limited selection of recreational clothing.

You will be able to purchase the necessities from the NEX. If you use specialty items for your favorite recipes, or special hair care needs or make-up lines, these should be purchased and shipped with your household goods.

There is no Military Clothing Sales store in Singapore, though the NEX maintains a small selection of some uniform items (covers, belts, etc.). You can order items through the military clothing sales catalog or online. The NEX is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mon-Sat. Contact the NEX at (+65) 6750-2409.

The NEX will process special orders for goods from their stores in Japan; delivery can take up to six weeks. The NEX accepts Singapore or U.S. dollars, credit cards, and STAR cards.





*This 2024 Welcome Guide is an authorized publication for the members of the Sembawang military community, published by FFSO Singapore Area Coordinator*



# **Singapore Area Coordinator (SAC) Welcome Aboard Booklet 2024**